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BS
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EVE

AND

HER DAUGHTERS OF HOLY WRIT

OR

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE.

BY FRANCES M. CAULKINS.

That our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. PSALM 144 : 12.

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EVE.

"And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living." GEN. 3:20.

WHAT graceful vision strikes the eye,
And captive holds th' admiring mind?
Hail, radiant daughter of the sky!
Hail, beauteous mother of mankind!

Turn hither that majestic form,
Replete with soft inviting grace,
And shed upon us, bright and warm,
The rosy sweetness of thy face.

See how she moves with gliding ease,
By flowing trésses softly veiled:
Light as the blossom-loving breeze,
Fresh as the dews by morn exhaled.

Exalted worship, grateful love,
Beam in her heaven-directed eye:
Impassioned, tender as the dove,
Yet holy as archangels high.

From peace to joy her feelings flow,
Serenely or intensely blest;
No frown above, or fear below,
Disturbs the sunshine of her breast.

A spirit warm with breath divine,
Sent forth upon her heavenly way,
To charm, enlighten, and refine—
Say, will this peerless being stray?

Fresh from its glorious Author's hand,
Untrodden lay the earth around;
By rivers cooled, by zephyrs fanned,
With mountains belted, forest-crowned.

Her deserts blushed with roses gay;
The vine enwreathed each craggy height;
Her plains in velvet softness lay,
O'erspread with sheaves of sunny light.

One fairer scene, where all were fair,
Shone forth resplendent as a bride;
For God's own hand a garden rare
Had planted by the river's side.

'T was fashioned from the spheres above,
A grove, a kingdom, and a bower;
A godlike pair that ruled by love,
Possessed in peace the princely dower.

Sweet sounds at evening filled the air,
Low spoken words, soft uttered lays,
The grateful song, the reverent prayer,
The anthem of adoring praise.

A garden was the sphere designed
For man's first home and love's first birth;
And still the garden's shade we find
Far nearer heaven than common earth.

Parental was the hand that spread
The lot of that primeval pair;
The joys of earth all heavenward led,
And blessings grew from toil and care.

No erring passions to be watched,
No strife with conscience and the will;
But soul and body, sweetly matched,
Concurred life's purpose to fulfil.

The mandates of the faultless mind
The flesh with willing speed obeyed;
Reason was quick, and thought refined,
And sense devotion's faithful aid.

To till the soil, to reap its wealth,
This was but light and sweet employ,
For sturdy toil makes ruddy health
And self-denial fosters joy.

Life was an ever-brightening light;
Oft would their guardian God descend,
And in the garden walk by night,
Communing as a friend with friend.

That garden was a fainter sky,
Heaven's shadow resting on the earth:
The trees that in the midst rose high,
Had in that loftier clime their birth.

To that blest scene came Satan last,
And there the shaft malignant hurled,
That into shivered fragments cast
The mirror of the heavenly world.

"Of all the trees the garden holds,
Eat, freely eat," thus spoke the Voice:
"For you the earth its wealth unfolds;
Herbs, fruits, and seeds await your choice—

"Save one: this fixed command obey:
Of yon fair tree of knowledge high
Eat not; for on that fatal day,
In dying thou shalt surely die."

So high the Speaker, and the law
So simple, the restraint so slight,
What charm could lure, what tempter draw
Those sinless spirits from the right?

Ah, the frail mother of mankind!
With fond desire she marked the tree,
And plucked and ate; insanely blind,
Careless of God and God's decree.

By Satan's bold suggestions fired,
And glowing with unhallowed pride,
To be as God her heart desired,
To know as God she vainly tried.

What hast thou done? That outstretched hand
Hath sown the seeds of guilt and woe;
The taint will spread o'er every land,
And every soul its plague-spot show.

Eve knew the curse, yet plucked and ate;
She sinned forewarned, enlightened, free;
Aspiring high, defying fate,
Deluded by a wily plea.

No habits with seducing ease,
  No winning words from love's sweet voice,
Lured her to sin by soft degrees—
  O'ermastered or perplexed her choice.

How sweetly easy to refrain ;
  How hard transgression to begin !
To break pure Nature's golden chain,
  And rashly struggle into sin !

All else was hers ; the world her own :
  Far round the melting fruitage waved
From shrub, tree, vine ; yet this alone,
  This one forbidden prize she craved.

Revolt so foul a doom must bear
  Far-reaching as the fall is low.
Farewell to peace ! Come, dark despair,
  Come, fear and shame, and pain and woe—

Leap on your victims : man must die !
  And lo, impatient of delay,
The shadowy Terror hovering nigh,
  Waits, eager for his first-born prey.

Nor only one grim shade appears;
A *second Death* of awful form
Demands his victims, and prepares
The fire and the undying worm.

The presence of their God departs,
And leaves no perfect peace behind;
No paradise within their hearts,
No painless bliss, no full-orbed mind.

How bright, how dark their span of life!
The seed-plot and the pictured doom
Of all our being's calm and strife,
Its dew and mildew, blight and bloom.

See, o'er the world, so wide, so drear,
With downcast eyes and movement slow,
Stung by contrition, shame, and fear,
Forth from the garden-vale they go.

With what deep groans and mournful sighs
Their thorny pathway they pursue:
The hill-tops answer to their cries,
The groves with sighs their sighs renew.

Thus sorrowing left repentant Eve
  Those odorous bowers and airs serene,
Nor backward looked to take sad leave,
  The last leave of that happy scene.

For there the fiery cherubim
  Waved high the circling sword of flame,
And thrilling was the choral hymn
  That from the garden watchers came.

Eve fell, nor fell alone; she drew
  Her weak companion to the snare;
And man, to his fair idol true,
  Her crime and punishment must share.

Nor yet deceived, but vainly wise,
  He listens to the syren's voice,
The claims of heavenly love denies,
  And makes an earthly love his choice.

Thus oft, through passion, pride, and art,
  Our blessings to temptations grow;
And heaven's best gift, a faithful heart,
  Yields but companionship in woe.

Heed not, Oh man, an angel bright,
That lightly speaks of God's high law;
Dark spirits clothe themselves in light,
Unwary hearts from truth to draw.

And thou, fair woman, fear to use
Persuasion but for some high end;
Thyself the shining pathway choose,
And gently lead therein thy friend.

Thy winning arts were all designed
To charm the steep ascending road,
Inform and fix the wayward mind,
And bring the wanderer home to God.

SARAH.

"She was very fair. I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her." GEN. 12:14; 17:16.

FROM ages of sepulchral gloom
In old Machpelah's honored tomb;
From records of the Hebrew sage
Inscribed upon the fivefold page;*

From eastern skies, from earth's young hours,
When patriarchs lived in tents and bowers,
Robed in thine oriental guise,
Rise, Sarah, Abraham's consort, rise!

A lovely and majestic form
Appears, with life's bright lustre warm;
Chaldean in her stately air,
Symmetric, and surpassing fair.

* Pentateuch, the five books.

Fair, but not faultless; see her life
Marked by evasion, rashness, strife:
A "princess" of celestial mien,
But oft in paths of error seen.

Twice did the timid patriarch seek,
By pretexts plausible but weak,
From pagan chiefs, in scenes untried,
To screen from harm his beauteous bride.*

His the rash thought—from danger's train,
By bold deceit, escape to gain;
But hers the apt concurrence shown,
Consent that made the guilt her own.

How oft hath beauty proved a snare,
Peace, health, and conscience to impair;
How oft a face, like Dian's bright,
Emits through clouds a fitful light.

Is beauty thine? Oh seek to show
A sweeter charm, a brighter glow—
A heart devout, a cheerful mind,
A conquered will to heaven resigned.

* Gen. 12:13; 20:2.

True grace is that which reigns within;
Immortal beauty seek to win,
And prize the amaranth sublime
Above the fading rose of time.

That face is fair, wherein we trace
The seal of God's sustaining grace;
And they are brilliant, who are bright
With sacred truth's unerring light.

It chanced before the tent one day,
Reposing from the noon-tide ray,
The patriarch sat: he raised his eye,
And lo, three strangers drawing nigh.

With hospitable speed he ran,
Lowly he bowed, and thus began:
"My lord, turn not in haste aside,
But in my tent's calm shade abide.

"Cool water for your dusted feet,
Refreshing food, attendance meet
Accept, and in these shades benign
Rest till the fervid hours decline."

The strangers paused with grave assent,
Reposing near the friendly tent;
While swift the household train prepare
The viands for their guests to share.

By Sarah's hands the cakes were made;
By Abraham's, from the herd conveyed
The fatted calf: each hand, each heart
Was quick its service to impart.

Such courtesy in tents was shown,
When time was young, and pomp unknown.
Behold the pleasing picture! See
The strangers and o'erarching tree.

The meat and cake in order placed,
With salt, milk, butter, duly graced;
Abraham stands by with service kind,
And Sarah in the door behind.

They talked; their thrilling words proclaim
The heaven from whence the strangers came;
That face, in such divine repose,
The ANGEL OF THE COVENANT shows.

Then was the prophecy unrolled
That Sarah's arms a son should hold:
She heard announced the promise bright,
But laughed incredulous and light.

Inly she laughed, and then denied:
"I did not laugh," she quickly cried.
Vain, thoughtless impulse! foolish art!
The Eye was there that reads the heart.

Yet o'er our thwarting, low designs,
Divine compassion calmly shines:
Believe or disbelieve; yet still
God will his promised word fulfil.

Of all earth's daughters, two alone
That deep peculiar bliss have known,
As mothers, on an aged breast,
To fold a new-born son to rest.

To Sarah came that boon divine,
As part of Mercy's vast design:
Maternal love her bosom thrilled;
The void of years was sweetly filled.

Yet discord still with fierce annoy
Troubled the fountain of her joy:
One drop that fountain could defile;
If Ishmael mocked, could Sarah smile?

The princess shows resentment high,
A fretful lip, a flashing eye;
Her lifted hand th' Egyptian maid
Drives outcast to the desert glade.

The mistress fierce, the maiden vain,
Each looked on each with proud disdain;
And yet, would each a trifle yield,
A word, a look the strife had healed.

With meek forbearance, words discreet,
The patient mind, the temper sweet,
A point to yield, a fault to own,
How brightly then had Sarah shone.

Fair, faulty woman: yet this phrase
Not all her varied path portrays;
True, fond, submissive to her lord,
She shared his toils, obeyed his word.

By grace her temper was refined;
The faithless made a trusting mind:
'Mid the blest heirs of faith,* her name
Shines with a bright enduring fame.

May every daughter of our land
In faith's high scroll like Sarah stand;
Like her, in earnest, duteous love,
A fair domestic model prove.

Yet, daughter, seek a lowlier charm,
A temper more divinely calm;
Be thou thy dwelling's constant light,
A star with inward lustre bright.

And while in Sarah's life you trace,
Like threads of gold, her faith and grace,
Observe how oft she went astray,
Nor take to heaven her devious way.

* Heb. 11:11.

HAGAR.

"And the angel of the Lord found her .... in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur." GEN. 16:7.

How cheering to the pilgrim's sight,
Upon a dreary waste,
A flowing fountain's sparkling light,
With verdant palm-trees graced.

The rippling waters lave the stones,
And murmur as they go:
More sweet than music's softest tones
The fountain's mellow flow.

Far off the camel scents the breath
Of fountain and of palm;
To man or beast 't is life from death,
'T is soul-reviving balm.

A diamond bright with emeralds bound,
Set in the desert sand—
Such is the fount, so green around
The feathery plumes expand.

Such gems, though like the diamond rare
The pilgrim's eye surveys:
He shouts, and shouting drops despair,
And gives to God the praise.

And see! far on the way to Shur
A lawn of vivid green,
Where waters flow and branches stir,
'Mid scorching sand is seen.

Thither a wandering maid forlorn
Moves faint in heart and limb;
She just can reach the shady bourne,
Just reach the well's cool brim.

She drinks and lives; but mortal fear
Her throbbing bosom swells,
And many a sad and bitter tear
Of wrong and exile tells.

Who meets her in her anguish there?
What still voice strikes her ear?
"Speak, Hagar; Sarah's maid, declare,
Why art thou wandering here?"

The thrilling sweetness of that voice
Breathes downward from the skies:
The listening solitudes rejoice,
Oppressive silence dies.

It falls on Hagar's wild despair
Like Gilead's holy balm;
Upward she looks, breathes heavenly air,
And sits entranced and calm.

"My mistress wears an angry face,"
At length she meekly said:
'To hide me from her wrath, I trace
These deserts wild and dread."

"Return, return to Sarah's hands,"
Thus spoke the voice on high,
"And I thy seed in all these lands
Will bless and multiply.

"Submit thyself to Sarah's word:
The child that thou shalt bear,
Him Ishmael* call, for here the Lord
Hath pitied thy despair.

* "God shall hear."

"A wild man shall he be; his hand
Against each hand shall strive;
Yet 'mid his brethren he shall stand,
And in their presence thrive."

Oh soothing vision! that sweet strain
The wanderer's heart made strong:
The desert seemed a verdant plain,
The fountain uttered song.

Lowly she spoke: "Thou seest me,
Jehovah-God, most high;
I also have looked up to thee
Who listened to my cry.

"Here God hath made his presence known;
Blest be this fountain's flow,
The well where He, the Living One,*
Looked down upon my woe."

Happy the solitude relieved
By visits from the skies;
Happy the stricken and bereaved
Whom God assists to rise.

* "Beer-lahai-roi—the well of Him that liveth and seeth me." Gen. 15:14.

How gently o'er the trusting maid
The shades of evening fell,
Reposing in the verdant shade
By that memorial well.

With swifter foot, a lighter heart,
Back to the tent she bore,
Content to take a menial part
At Sarah's beck once more.

A spark divine was in her soul,
That gave her strength to bear
The haughty word, the harsh control,
The vassal's bitter fare.

Years onward roll, and Sarah's maid
Again in deserts wild
Roams o'er the sandy waste dismayed,
An exile with her child.

Through Ishmael's fault and Sarah's wrath,
She meets this doom severe;
But in the desert's burning path
The Lord again draws near.

The mother's agonizing groan,
The lad's resounding cry,
As down he lay to die alone,
Were answered from on high.

She starts: what hath her quick eye found;
What meets her listening ear?*
A wind-swept leaf, a murmuring sound—
Signs of a well-spring near.

Again the bubbling fount became
Combined with Hagar's woe;
And ever be her lonely name†
Blent with the fountain's flow.

When pilgrims rest, or lowly bow
In prayer by well and tree,
Lone woman of the fountain, thou
Shalt oft remembered be.

Thy quick obedience—faith's bright test—
Met with its due reward;
But Oh, the grace that soothed and blessed,
Let angel bards record.

* Gen. 21:19. † Hagar—a stranger.

Our God is Love: man's darkest hour
Is his choice hour to bless;
Light breaks, and love's transforming power
Makes anguish happiness.

Thus Hagar found relief and peace
Through tenderness divine,
While time unrolled the wondrous lease
Of Ishmael's mighty line.

An archer bold on Paran's sands,
In desert pomp he reigned:
Twelve sons renowned, that shared his lands,
The same rude sway maintained.

And still unchanged, a free, bold race,
Wild o'er the wastes they run:
An Ishmael is each Arab chief;
Each Arab, Ishmael's son.

REBEKAH.

"And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon." GEN. 24:15, 16.

What damsel this, so fair and bright,
With song and pitcher, tripping light
O'er grassy fields and flowers?
She seeks the grove, where in the shade
A well is scooped and stones are laid,
To gather up the showers.

There Haran's maids at sunset fair,
With all their thirsty flocks repair,
And pilgrims know the ground:
A stranger now is resting nigh,
His evening prayer is wafted high,
His camels graze around.

With hushed respect the maid draws near;
Descends, and from the fountain clear
Her tall stone pitcher fills:
"Fair maid," then spoke the pilgrim grave,
"One cool refreshing draught I crave
Of what this fount distils.

"Faint is my heart, for long the way,
And fiercely shone the noon-tide ray."
"Drink, freely drink," she said:

"And for thy camels I will draw."
The man with wonder and with awe
Drank, and the scene surveyed.

With cheerful zeal the maiden wrought,
The pilgrim wondering in his thought
At heaven's abounding grace;
For Abraham's God this damsel fair,
In answer to his recent prayer,
Had guided to the place.

She ended: he his stores unrolled;
Her hands he decked with chains of gold,
With jewels her attire;
Then asked her kindred and her name.
She answered, "I from Milcah came;
Bethuel is my sire."

Then bowed the old man low in prayer.
"It is the Lord, whose guardian care
My feet hath hither brought.
How rich his grace! his truth how clear!
These are my master's kindred dear,
And this the maid I sought."

So oft we rush with sigh and groan
Relief to gain at Mercy's throne,
  So few with thanks repair,
This grateful voice sounds doubly sweet,
Returning to the mercy-seat
  To own the answered prayer.

Swift to her mother's tented shade
The damsel ran, her gems displayed,
  And spread the tidings round:
"From Abraham and from distant lands
The stranger came; his generous hands
  With costly gifts abound."

Then Laban with a glowing breast
Hastes to the well and greets the guest:
  "Oh friend, why should you stand
Abroad with all your weary train
At nightfall, on the houseless plain,
  As in some barbarous land?

"Come in, thou blessed of the Lord;
For thee our ample bounds afford
  Food, shelter, and repose.

The banquet stands prepared for thee;
Come in, a welcome fair and free
Bethuel's roof bestows."

The stranger then with kindly heed
Unharnessed, bade the camels feed,
His men refreshment seek;
But when the board for him was spread,
"I taste no meat," he gravely said,
"Till I mine errand speak:

"A pilgrim by divine command,
My master left Chaldea's land,
An unknown home to seek;
Jehovah hath enlarged his store,
And kings bring tribute to his door,
And of his wisdom speak.

"The men and maids that round him wait,
The camels that enrich his state,
His flocks and herds and gold,
All these to Isaac as his heir
He gives, the son that Sarah bare
When he, my lord, was old.

"'Son of the promise, and my joy,
Oh let not Canaan's maids destroy
His peace,' my master cried;
Then with an oath my soul he bound,
From Nahor's race, on eastern ground,
To find his son a bride.

"Then forth I set; by sun and star
Directed to these realms afar,
Hills, rivers, mountains o'er:
Jehovah traces out my way;
His guardian care and guiding ray
Have led me to your door.

"He to the well thy sister brought,
The very maid my prayer had sought:
Now kindly deal and true—
The damsel will ye trust with me?
Or seeking still some maiden free,
Shall I my way pursue?"

They answered: "'T is the Lord's high will;
What God commands we must fulfil,
Nor good, nor bad, we say:

To Abraham's son we yield the maid;
The Lord this plan hath wisely laid,
And we his word obey."

They asked the maiden, "Wilt thou now,
O'er stream and vale and mountain brow,
Take up thy journey slow—
Forsake thy kindred, and obey
Henceforth this unknown Isaac's sway?"
She answered, "I will go."

The morrow came; her home to leave,
Her mother's bosom to bereave,
From native scenes to part;
For these, though many a tear she shed,
And many a tender farewell said,
Failed not the maiden's heart.

Forward they ride, a bold array;
The joyful steward led the way,
With men for guards designed:
Then came the faithful nurse and bride,
With serving men and maids beside;
The laden train behind.

Days passed and weeks,* till full in view
Fair Mamre's oak its branches threw
Against the sunset ray.
What manly form from yonder tent,
In musing mood, with head low bent,
Comes forth upon the way?

'T is Abraham's son; he walks abroad,
Communing thoughtfully with God,
At early eventide:
How quick the maid, in bashful guise,
The veil draws round, from Isaac's eyes
Her timid face to hide.

But straight, to courteous custom true,
To Sarah's tent, with reverence due,
His trembling bride he led.
The veil removed, what modest grace,
What sweetness charmed him! O'er her face
What mantling blushes spread!

Such was Rebekah, artless, fair;
Her manners frank, her generous care
Our fond esteem engage.

* It was a journey of five or six hundred miles, at about twenty miles a day.

Child of simplicity and truth,
Kind, yielding, gentle in her youth,
  Why not the same in age?

Behold her Isaac's honored wife.
They prospered; on their wedded life
  The God of promise smiled.
Two sons they had—a Jacob kind,
An Esau of a wayward mind—
  For each a favorite child.

One fault a second hastes to share;
Weak fondness here wakes yearning there—
  Too partial each fond heart.
The tent a scene of strife became:
Woe that the son a lie should frame,
  Taught by the mother's art.

See Jacob branded through her guile,
Deceiver bold, *supplanter* vile!
  And though the deeds she wrought
Were made God's purpose to fulfil,
Not less the error of her will,
  The folly of her thought.

Yet well we know, with grief sincere,
With sorrow's penitential tear,
She mourned her deep deceit;
And cleansed in spirit, hailed afar
The promised Light, the Morning Star,
And longed its rays to greet.

Oh wondrous Star! whose backward light,
From Zion's hill reflected bright,
The patriarchs loved to view;
They caught the yet unrisen beam,
They saw the gospel's distant gleam,
Its healing virtue knew.

Ere earth began her rolling way,
The Lamb of God was slain to pay
The ransom of our race;
The saints of old by Christian faith
Were guided in their heavenly path,
And cleansed and saved by grace.

RACHEL.

"Behold Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep." "And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept." "Rachel was beautiful and well-favored." GEN. 29:6, 11, 17.

SHE comes, a graceful, gladsome maid,
The Rachel of the sheep!
By woodland crags, or hill-side shade,
Well skilled the flock to keep.

Magician sweet, whose artless wile,
Whose sprightly winning ways
Seven years of service could beguile
To seem a few short days.

Time then was young, the truth bore sway,
Kind courteous deeds were wrought,
And toil was but a pleasing way
Of sweetening time and thought.

The great within themselves were great,
Nor scorned their flocks to tend;
Simplicity was beauty's mate,
And custom, virtue's friend.

And Jacob for his wife kept sheep;*
Light task for willing hands!
No road is long, no way is steep,
When love the toil demands.

He kissed the gentle shepherdess,
When to the well she drew:
He kissed and wept; the tear and kiss
Were like the sun and dew.

A sun-browned face and plain array
True beauty ne'er destroy;
His glance was love's quick kindling ray,
His tears were tears of joy.

No love so true was ever feigned
In romance or in song;
No bride at such a price obtained,
Of vassalage and wrong.

Hide, student, hide the weight of years
This ardent lover bore;
O breathe not to romantic ears
That frosty word fourscore.†

* Hosea 12:12. † Jacob is computed to have been seventy-seven years of age when he engaged to serve seven years for Rachel.

For he was fresh and young in soul,
And all her heart he won:
Their wedded years, how swift they roll,
With Joseph for their son!

A few short years, and where is now
Our Rachel of the sheep?
She lies on Bethlehem's lonely brow,
In death's unruffled sleep.

Love could not soothe her dying cry,
Nor wrestling Israel save:
Heart-rent, he reared a pillar high,
To mark her cherished grave.*

Through life he bore the anguish dread
Which then his fond heart broke,
And sadly on his dying bed
Of his great sorrow spoke.†

There pilgrims still with grief profound
Mourn her untimely doom,
And move in pensive stillness round
The Rachel of the tomb.

* Gen. 35 : 20. † Gen. 48 : 7.

But Oh, from that sepulchral heap,
How dirge-like was the strain,
When startled Rachel waked from sleep
To mourn her children slain.*

That wail the depths of Ramah stirred,
As Herod's sword flashed high;
And mothers in their anguish heard
Their slaughtered children's cry.

Then Rachel with her daughters wept,
Then Bethlehem shook with fears;
And thrills of mighty anguish crept
Through hearts too sad for tears.

Then Rachel's tomb symbolic stood,
A monument of woe,
Against the Anointed, sent of God,
The rage of kings to show.

* Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:18.

LEAH.

"He loved also Rachel more than Leah." "She said, Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction." "Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also." "Now will I praise the Lord." GEN. 29:30–35.

ONE heart with only one may plight,
One wedded pair be blest:
O man, thy bosom hath no right
To take a second guest.

What low deceits are born and thrive
On this forbidden ground!
That house is but a heathen hive
Wherein the taint is found.

Ye wives of Lamech, what base art
Chained you to one right hand?
Sad partners of one home and heart,
First of your class ye stand.

In your brief record no sweet strain
Connubial blessing shows;
No Adahs and no Zillahs twain
In household bliss repose.

Revenge and triumph, bold command,
Contention sharp and rude,
Make e'en a patriarch's house a strand
With costly wrecks bestrewed.

Such Leah's lot—an unloved wife;
No smiles to cheer her way;
No soft sweet words to charm her life
And all her cares repay.

Unwooed, unwelcomed, undesired;
And radiant in her sight,
The vision of a face admired—
How deep was Leah's blight!

Yet recompense sublimely sweet
Her grateful heart surveyed,
When sons like cedars round her feet
Embowered her in their shade.

Thus from the bounteous hands of God
Gifts drop like autumn leaves;
Each heart turned upwards from the sod
Some special boon receives.

To this, the transient days of love;
To that, respect and age;
To all the heavenly whispering Dove
Harsh passions to assuage;

Fierce trials to make souls resigned;
Bright hopes to win large hearts:
Thus heaven to every varying mind
A varying grace imparts.

Of Leah's life, the page unrolled
No heart-rebellion shows;
No wilful words or murmurings bold,
Repinings deep disclose.

Hear what her grateful faith reveals:
"The Lord hath heard my cry;
The sorrows of my soul he heals:
O praise the Lord most high."

And higher yet had been her meed
Of praise for grace divine,
Could she have seen the Promised Seed
Spring up in her bright line.

From Judah, SHILOH: wake, O tongue,
And strive His praise to reach.
Praise Him, the fountain of all song,
The glory of all speech.

Go, lonely wife, of Leah learn
To make thy God thy love:
Neglected one, sweet incense burn,
And send thy heart above.

THE MOTHER OF MOSES.

"And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein: and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.' Exod. 2:3.

Sad mother! with a leaping heart she hears
The wail of childhood; tortured by her fears,
And mellowing all her work with prayers and tears.

Along the Nile she gathers osiers green
In furtive rambles, fearing to be seen,
And seeking still the treasured heap to screen.

Then secretly, and oft at midnight dark,
She weaves and twines her faith into the ark,
And with God's blessing lines her cradle-bark.

'T was featly done; brave, buoyant as a shell;
With pithy reeds to mount the billowy swell,
And molten pitch all moisture to repel.

A casket for her jewel! See, 't is made:
There lies the babe, in linen folds arrayed;
A rosy face, with smiles and tears inlaid.

The sister waits within some close retreat—
The mother waits beside the mercy-seat—
Jehovah waits to bless the waiting feet.

The breath that soars to heaven with its request,
Brings back submission to the trusting breast:
With faith to help them, means are ever blest.

She left amid the reeds her trembling dove,
Entrusted to the brooding wings above:
Sweet in its pain was her last look of love.

That night, redeemed, she nursed upon her arm
A royal infant, yet her own life's charm,
Changed to a prince, and franchised from all harm.

Let confidence in God thy soul possess,
And thou art strong, whatever ills oppress—
Faith's inspiration is insured success.

ZIPPORAH.

"He sat down by a well." "And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock." "And he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter." Exod. 2:15–21.

An ancient scene my fancy fills,
A hamlet 'mid the crags and hills,
  Far downward in the dell,
The flocks at evening gathering slow,
A pilgrim in the shade, and lo,
  Seven sisters at the well.

Seven sisters shining as the sun;
The kids and lambs around them run,
  And scent the water nigh:
Down from the hills a barbarous throng
Of wandering Arabs, fierce and strong,
  Alarm them, and they fly.

Then steps the stranger from his screen,
Of stalwart form and princely mien
  Firm-footed as a rock:

With but the waving of his hand
He rules the scene, o'erawes the band,
And waters Midian's flock.

Seven sisters like the Pleiades,
Embrowned, but dazzling, sure to please,
And each might grace a throne.
Seven maidens! Moses saw but one;
The stars were hidden by the sun,
And only Zipporah shone.

The father was of Abraham's race—
An Emir, in whose life we trace
Unshaken trust in God:
Seven daughters magnified his fame;
One only has a living name,
A seat above the clod.

And Moses was content to bear
His forty years of exile there.
What made him thus sublime?
Those years with Zipporah were spent
She was his jewel of content,
The charm that shortened time.

MIRIAM.

"Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand." Exod. 15:20. "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses." Num. 12:1. "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." Mic. 6:4.

Thee, Miriam, prophetess of old,
That with thy princely brothers twain
The host of Israel led
Through deserts wild and dread;
Thee, mistress of the lofty lyric strain,
Of timbrels loud and measures bold,
We hail thee, Miriam, stately Levite maid;
We hail thee, but with verse earth-clogged and cold,
A timid wavering line,
Oh, how unlike to thine,
Chantress inspired of melody divine!

In varying colors, dark or bright,
Truth's vivid pencil pictures thee to sight.
At first by Nile's fair border seen,
Half hid among the rushes green,
Watching that fragile ark with osiers twined
Thermutis from the water drew:
To the fair babe so skilfully enshrined,
A sentinel affectionate and true.
Winged were the tender feet
That bore those tidings sweet

To the fond mother, "Haste, thy child to meet!
The princess drew it from the plashing sea,
And thou its nurse shalt be."

Here pause, till yon time-measuring sun
A full half century hath won.
And Miriam now, before Jehovah's shrine,
A prophetess divine;
Inspired the battles of the Lord
In lofty measures to record,
Leads forth a timbrelled band of Israel's daughters,
Sounding a loud victorious strain
O'er Egypt's fierce embattled train,
Her king and all his captains slain,
His chariots whelmed amid the rushing waters.
To Moses and his choral throng
They answer with responsive song:
"Sing to the Lord! proclaim
The triumphs of the conquering name
That journeyeth in the cloud and in the flame.
Sing to the Lord! lift high
His praises to the sky;
The horse and rider in the Red sea lie!"

Now cease, ye joyful numbers, cease;
To sorrow's plaintive tones be hushed:
Let low sad sounds recall
Aspiring Miriam's fall.
An inward canker hath devoured her peace;
The thorn of envy rankles in her breast:
To soothe the pang, a hero must be crushed.
And lo, forgetful of his high behest,
Accomplice of her schemes unblest,
See Aaron by her side with anger flushed.
With self-laudations proud,
And impious murmurings loud,
Their brother's shining face they seek to cloud.

"Hath God by Moses spoken?
We also have proclaimed his will.
Shall he who takes to his embrace
The daughter of an outcast race—
An Æthiop for his bosom friend—
Whose sons from guilty Cush descend,
Of heavenly favor show the only token?
We are his equals, and we fill
As high a station on the heavenly hill."

Woe, woe for Miriam! her high harp is broken.
Woe, woe for Aaron! he is found
Standing on holy ground,
Yet most unholy counsel breathing round.

Jehovah heard, and from his fiery throne
His presence and his wrath made known.
Descending from the cloven sky,
The pillar veiled in cloud came nigh,
And at the curtained door majestic stood.
The marshalled host with awe
That awful vision saw,
And trembled as they heard the seeming sound
Of thunders deep, and waters rushing round.

"Come out, come out, ye three,
And hear my fixed decree,"
Thus spoke th' almighty Voice.
"Obedient to my high commands,
Alone my servant Moses stands;
On him I set my choice.
Not in dark speeches, or in visions dim,
By dreams or symbols, I commune with him;

But face to face he learns my will,
And hastes my pleasure to fulfil.
Why were ye not afraid, a breath to raise,
Ye scoffers bold, against my servant's praise?"
Uprose the pillared cloud,
With thunderings long and loud.
A leper white as snow stood Miriam proud.

Yet ever good, compassionate, and kind
Is God our Father, ready to forgive.
At Aaron's tears, at Moses' plea,
He set their tainted sister free,
Cleansed the foul leprosy, and bade her live.
And Miriam with a humbled mind,
In meekness bore the doom assigned,
Seven days without the camp to stay,
Mourn o'er her sins, and for remission pray.
Thence over deserts wild and dread,
Where'er the guiding Pillar led,
Bearing the sacred tent,
The vast migration went,
With Miriam and her brothers twain,
Leaders of the harnessed train.

What more of Miriam? One short line,*
Of fond fraternal love the sign
Seals up her joys and woes,
And marks from whence the minstrel princess rose
To meet her Judge divine.
"They came to Kadesh, and there Miriam died;
There was she buried." Tears by Israel shed,
The wails of women sounding far and wide:
High funeral honors—these are left unsaid.
Enough for her, for you, for me,
When from the grasp of earth set free,
Through priceless, boundless grace
Shown to our guilty race,
We sleep in Christ, and wake in his embrace.

* Num. 20:1

DEBORAH.

"And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah, and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment." JUDG. 4:4, 5.

HAIL, Deborah, guardian of a wasted land,
Under thy palm-tree dwelling;
Dispensing justice with supreme command,
Or rapt in ecstacy, with harp in hand,
Melodious measures swelling.

God raised thee in a dark and troubled time
His people to deliver;
Shed on thee gifts supernal and sublime,
To break the yoke of tyranny and crime,
Th' oppressor's chain to shiver.

When manly bosoms quailed with fear and awe,
A woman, great but lowly,
Assumed the sceptre and gave forth the law,
Aroused the nation, led the tribes to war,
Returned in triumph holy.

Then Deborah sang: high heaven to hear that song
Might give its angels leisure;
The listening earth chain every torrent strong,
Call in her stray winds and her plumy throng,
To learn that rapturous measure.

"Praise ye the Lord," she sang; "kings, princes, hear:
The Lord hath wrought salvation.
Jehovah marched before us out of Seir,
The mountains melted, Sinai shook with fear,
His arm avenged our nation.

"King Jabin and his locusts swept the field,
And sowed dismay and horror:
Our plundered Israel, reft of spear and shield,
Shrank from the highways, lived in caves concealed,
Or crouched in fear and sorrow.

"Deserted and forlorn the hamlets lay,
Uttering no sound of gladness:
The tyrant heathen in the streets bore sway;
Through by-paths travellers felt their timid way:
The land was robed in sadness.

"Then I arose, I Deborah arose,
To comfort the faint-hearted:
Mother in Israel, sent to heal her woes,
To scatter like a whirlwind all her foes,
By grace from heaven imparted.

"Hail to the chiefs that with their warriors came,
Their willing aid to render!
Awake, O Deborah; breathe th' inspiring flame:
Rise, Barak, bring your captives in; proclaim
The doom of each offender.

"Exult, ye judges in the gates that stand;
No more shall Israel languish:
Shout, nobles, that ride daintily and grand;
Sing, peaceful men and maidens, for the land
Is freed from all her anguish."

A sound came from mount Ephraim; fast it grew
To warfare's heavy rattle:
To Kedesh first, then through the tribes it flew,
Writers, vine-dressers, nobles, princes true,
Swift gathering to the battle.

From forest and from seaside, hill and plain,
What hurrying, shouting, mustering!
Ten thousand strong, a bold, determined train,
With stake or sling, or ox-goad armed amain,
On Tabor's bosom clustering.

Then came the kings; old Canaan's kings took post
By dark Megiddo's water:
The trampling steeds and chariots swept the coast;
A warlike captain, Sisera, led the host,
Thirsting for spoil and slaughter.

In clouds they came, a fierce, unrighteous brood.
Haste, Israel, haste and rally.
Then Deborah, hanging o'er the battle, stood,
And Barak 'gainst the raging multitude
Rushed onward to the valley.

They met, they fought; then fought the hosts of heaven,
The stars fought in their courses;
The host of Sisera, backward turned and driven,
Down into Kishon's ancient torrent driven;
There perished his proud forces.

Ye limping steeds, with broken hoofs, blood-dyed,
  Late prancing in your glory;
Ye warriors, struggling with the furious tide—
My soul, how many thousands swept aside,
  How many dead and gory!

The strong were broken down, and Sisera fled—
  Fled fast that mighty foeman:
No princely arm struck down his lofty head;
The land was roused, the host to battle led,
  The chieftain slain by woman.

On foot he fled; to Heber's tent he came,
  Weary and faint and fearful:
By heaven impelled his forfeit life to claim,
"Turn in, my lord, turn in," the wily dame
  Exclaimed in accents cheerful.

He asked for water; milk she gave, and bread:
  She spoke him fair and kindly:
Refreshment in a lordly dish she spread.
"Fear not; beneath this mantle rest," she said.
  He trusted her most blindly.

Her hand upon the hammer and the nail,
Her right hand on the hammer:
She smote; she pierced his head; her strokes avail:
He never waked; he had no time to wail:
He died, and raised no clamor.

Hail, first of women, who disdained that day
The foe of God to shelter!
To Jael's faith fell Sisera a prey:
Low at her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay:
She left him there to welter.

His mother at her lattice sun and star
Outwatched, to wait his coming.
"Why hastes he not with tidings from the war?
Why tarry thus his chariot-wheels afar?
Where are his war-steeds foaming?"

Her ladies spoke; she too responded gay,
Her own impatience chiding:
"Aha, they linger, cumbered with the prey!
The captives and the treasures breed delay,
The plundering and dividing.

"Have they not sped, each as he homeward hies
Leading some Hebrew maiden?
But he, my chief, obtains the richest prize,
Garments of curious art, and costly dyes,
Robes with embroideries laden."

So let thy foes, O Lord, for ever run
Blind, headlong to their ruin;
While they that love thee, like the beaming sun,
In brightness move, and find, when day is done,
The meed of their well-doing.

Thus Heber's wife, thus Deborah, heaven-inspired,
Fulfilled their dread commission:
O'ermastering faith their tender bosoms fired
To do high work, and gave the strength required,
With inward, prompt decision.

Not woman's duty now, in war's dire track
The angry steel to flourish;
Gentler her task—to lead the wanderer back,
Sow the true seed, supply the poor man's lack,
And all true goodness nourish.

Yet come and learn how heavenly faith displays
Its brightness in this story;
How prompt, how earnest Deborah's song of praise;
How quick, at heaven's command, true faith obeys,
And gives to God the glory.

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

"And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter!" JUDG. 11:34, 35.

In Mizpeh there is mirth to-day,
Timbrels and trumpets ringing.
'T is Jephthah's home: ye maidens gay,
Bring palms, bring flowers, and strew the way,
Rejoicing, dancing, singing.

Joy, joy for Israel! tidings great
On all the high winds flying;
Loud heralds at the city gate,
Fleet runners, breathless and elate,
Their joyful message crying.

The Lord went out with Gilead's band,
And Chemosh fell before him.
What idol on his throne can stand,
When Israel's God with wrathful hand
His fiery rod shakes o'er him?

Then broke the cloud on Ammon's head
With sudden wild disaster;
Her fields are all with havoc spread,
Her rivers run with slaughter red,
Her king obeys a master.

Hark! hear ye not the victor's car?
Strike up your joyful ditties.
The clarion sounds; he comes from far:
T is Jephthah, thunderbolt of war,
Conqueror of twenty cities.

Impatient her fond sire to greet,
A nymph, with light heart bounding,
Darts from the throng in grace complete,
With bird-like song and twinkling feet,
And wrist-bells gaily sounding.

He has but one, a daughter rare,
In youthful dew and splendor:
Love gives her wings; she treads on air,
Eager the first embrace to share,
Her homage first to render.

True filial love is love divine,
Only less pure and holy
Than that which from devotion's shrine
Mounts upward, faith's ecstatic sign,
From bosoms meek and lowly.

The hero comes! but whence that cry,
That piercing cry of anguish?
Why would he from the damsel fly,
And to those outstretched arms deny
The clasp for which they languish?

Behold the twain, transfixed, amazed;
He in despair and horror,
With sinews stiff and eye-balls glazed,
As one by sudden vengeance crazed;
She, in surprise and sorrow.

"Father!" that only word, breathed low,
Upon her pale lip quivers;
"Father!" it cuts him like a blow:
Again he feels his life-blood flow,
Again with anguish shivers.

He speaks, but with averted brow:
"Alas, alas, my daughter!
Once all my joy, my trouble now.
Oh, fatal oath! Oh, fearful vow
That dooms my child to slaughter!

"Would I had fallen by Ammon's hate,
In battle fierce and gory.
My child, thou hast brought low my state,
And cast the shadow of thy fate
Athwart mine hour of glory.

"A vow, a vow to heaven I made,
Nor must my purpose falter:
'T was blindly done, 't was rashly said,
But sealed on high; thou must be laid
A victim on God's altar."

A moment stood in meek surprise
That pure pale maiden blossom;
Then with unfaltering voice replies,
Her gentle arms in thoughtful guise
Folded o'er her young bosom:

"My father, sacred be the vow
That to the Lord is spoken.
With reverence to thy will I bow:
Behold thine offering ready now;
Let not thy word be broken.

"Thy prayers are heard; on Israel's foe
The Lord hath vengeance taken;
He nerved thine arm to strike the blow;
Ammon and all her towns lie low,
Dismembered and forsaken.

"Then since our God hath fought for thee,
And o'er thee spread his banner,
Deal as thine oath requires with me;
I yield my life to thy decree,
And still can sing, Hosanna!"

Transcendent in this maid appears
Her duteous calm compliance,
The courage of her tender years,
The faith that triumphed o'er her fears,
Her firm, heaven-fixed reliance.

No murmurings, no impulsive prayer
Bemoaned her sad condition;
Two months her spirit to prepare
For its great change, was all her care,
Her single, sweet petition.

Two months, a respite brief, she spent
Amid her maidens tearful;
Roaming and wailing as they went,
In solemn chant or soft lament,
O'er mountains lone and fearful.

Long lingered in that desert shade
The memories deep and tender,
Of plaintive hymns, by which the maid
Sought in those lonely hours God's aid
Her spirit to surrender.

Sure, grace divine, in youth's soft prime,
To her true heart was given;
Sealed, sanctified, she launched from time,
And crowned with martyrdom sublime,
Receded into heaven.

She died: ye maids of Israel, wail,
Wail on these mountains yearly;
Swell with your sighs the rushing gale,
And teach to every hill and dale
The name ye loved so dearly.

Mourn for the meek one, who was led
Like a young lamb to slaughter;
Let banners droop and palls be spread,
Harps whisper low, and tears be shed,
For Jephthah's martyred daughter.

The victim, not the offerer's deed,
We hail with praise unceasing;
To him the crime, for her the meed;
Hers the rich gift, the true heart-heed,
And hers the altar's blessing.

NAOMI AND RUTH.

"Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah." RUTH 1:7.

WHITHER upon your silent way,
Ye lonely women three?
Why thus from Moab's borders stray,
With pilgrim staff and garb of grey,
Like outcasts forced to flee?
Weary and wild, by night or day,
Yon mountain road will be.

Three widows: one a matron wise,
In exile and in woe.
Her native scenes, Judea's skies,
The courts of peace, before her rise,
And bright in memory glow:
She for Jehovah's worship sighs
And homeward turns to go.

Slowly the first rude height they gain,
And wide the scene survey;
Beyond them, weary hills of pain,
Where savage beasts and bold men reign,
Stretch wild and dark away:
Here Moab spreads her green domain,
With homes and harvests gay.

Long, long they look; with love's keen eye
Three clustered tombs they view,
Left lonely under Moab's sky;
Three cells where rifled caskets lie
That once rich treasure knew;
And each breathes back a farewell sigh,
To her loved partner true.

The matron sighed, "Lo, yonder gleams
The sad Asphaltic sea:
But, Jordan, where thy watery beams?
Where, Judah, all thy hills and streams,
In memory flashing free?
My native land, thou fliest like dreams
From eyes that doat on thee."

In gentle and respectful state
Around that matron old
The Moab sisters duteous wait;
Her counsels are like words of fate
From wisdom's books unrolled.
She speaks; her lips bear precious freight;
They hoard the molten gold.

"Turn back, my daughters, ye are free;
Return, my daughters dear;
Can I e'er win from God's decree
More sons, your partners yet to be?
My daughters, leave me here.
Go seek again your childhood's tree,
And kindred bosoms cheer.

"Nay, weep not, dear ones; for your sake
It pierces deep my heart,
That God should all my branches shake;
But let my heart in secret break,
And bear alone the dart:
Why should ye drink my sorrow? Take
My blessing and depart."

Then on her neck the sisters fell,
And wept and wailed amain:
But Orpah's tears soon ceased to swell;
She kissed, embraced, and said farewell,
And spoke of parting pain;
Then turned with secret joy to dwell
With her own gods again.

Naomi sighed: "Thy sister's thought
No longer dwells with truth;
She counts Jehovah's worship naught:
The snares of earth her soul have caught,
The idols of her youth.
Thou too world-wisdom hast been taught;
Follow thy sister, Ruth."

Sweet were the accents that replied:
"Entreat me not, I pray,
To leave thee; weal or woe betide,
Still let me journey by thy side,
Companion of life's way,
Lodge where thou lodgest, and abide
Beside thee night and day.

"Thy people shall my people be,
Thy God my God most high:
The Lord forbid by his decree
That aught but death part thee and me;
And when the end draws nigh,
Where death shall set thy spirit free,
There I would also die."

Oh beauteous words, of depth sublime,
And tenderness most rare,
Strong faith that treads down birth and clime,
Woman's deep love outlasting time,
A brave heart ills to bear,
And fond affection's gentlest chime
Blend in bright union there.

Hail, Ruth, of high and steadfast mind!
Hail, meek, submissive Ruth!
Welcome to Israel! Thou shalt find
Thy wild branch with her olive twined,
Refreshed with heavenly youth:
See how the graceful tendrils wind,
Conversion clasping truth.

First-fruits from Moab, go, proclaim
The harvest-home begun.
Room, room in Israel! spread the flame;
Room, room for every Gentile name;
Room e'en for Babylon!
Messiah comes, and his high fame
Shall thousands bring for one.

Now turn we to a rural scene
On Bethlehem's fruitful plain:
Though gifted for a harvest queen,
With courteous words and graceful mien,
Above the rustic train,
The gentle Ruth goes forth to glean
The sheaves of falling grain.

With nimble hands, quick-winged by love,
She gathers up her store:
All day, where'er the sickles move,
She hovers like a fluttering dove
The reaper's footsteps o'er,
Gleaning the grains that from above
Fall on the harvest floor.

The master, moving 'mid the train,
Descries the matchless fair:
For her he drops the ripened grain,
Speaks with her in a friendly strain
Of all her filial care,
And bids her as a guest remain,
The evening meal to share.

RUTH IN THE HARVEST-FIELD.

A board spread in some shady nook,
And graced with tray and gourd;
Cakes, fruits from neighboring branches shook,
Parched corn, and water from the brook,
Sufficed this rural lord:
And Ruth had many a kindly look,
And many a courteous word.

Light heart, light step bore home that night
The earnings of the day:
Ruth's face was like an angel's bright,
With sweet success and hope's young light,
As spread in fond display
Before the dame's admiring sight,
Her heap of barley lay.

A life with care and toil replete,
For love's dear sake can please:
Ruth thought not of her weary feet,
Her willing heart made labor sweet,
And softened pain's decrees:
She loved her trials more than meat,
Her duty more than ease.

Requitals rich shall round her spring,
Like blossoms from the dust:
Thy noble heart, come, Boaz, bring,
And at her feet thy treasures fling
In generous love and trust.
Fear not; she hails the promised King,
The peaceful One, the Just.

On her fair head, like fragrant dew,
Naomi's blessing lies.
For her seven duteous sons could do
No more than thou, O daughter true,
Light of her aged eyes.
And see, to build her house anew,
Thy columns round her rise.

See Obed, Jesse, David, names
Of bright and high degree:
Thy Moab blood spreads wide, and claims
Kings, patriarchs, and exalted dames,
That Shiloh's light could see;
Prophets and bards, whose bosom-flames
Soared up like incense free.

Amid that starry stream will shine
  Eternally thy name;
Engrafted on the sacred Vine,
A mother in Messiah's line,
  Bright link of Gentile claim;
The great life-prize, the crown is thine
  Beyond the meed of fame.

HANNAH.

"For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." "And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, my horn is exalted in the Lord." 1 SAM. 1:27; 2:1.

Lo, to Shiloh's sacred gate
Hannah brings her child in state,
On Jehovah's word to wait.
See her by the altar now,
Faithful to her secret vow.

With a mighty throng they came,
Each with one transcendent aim,
Joyous and with loud acclaim,
Bringing from all Israel's coasts
Tribute to the Lord of hosts.

Bullocks of a generous birth,
Lambs and goats of sterling worth,
Choicest fruits they bring of earth:
Only Hannah brings her son,
Gives the prize her faith hath won.

Can the mother leave him there—
Leave the darling of her care,
Jewel of her household rare?
Leave him lonely there to roam,
Lonely seek her vacant home?

Yea, the child so fair and tender,
Darting round his eyes of splendor,
She hath borrowed, and can render
With a willing heart to heaven
What her faithful Lord hath given.

Mark the stately solemn scene:
Chiefs and priests around them lean;
Eli with a brow serene,
And the consecrated child,
Clothed in linen undefiled.

Seal the gift with rites divine;
Offerings make of flour and wine;
Then the cherished gift resign:
On Jehovah's altar lay
Child and heart, and go thy way.

Sweetly grave, the neophyte
Listens to his mother's plight;
God looks down and seals the rite:
With the ark the child remained,
There to be divinely trained.

But the mother: was her heart
Cleft as with a fatal dart?
Did the cry of anguish start?
No; a song of rapture blest
Burst from her impassioned breast.

"Now, my heart, in God rejoice;
God, my soul's eternal choice:
Praise him, Oh my sounding voice!
Be my song, my mouth enlarged,
With salvation's triumph charged.

"Talk not arrogant and loud,
Ye with shining gifts endowed:
Why should mortal man be proud?
Who is holy but the Lord?
What unchanging but his word?

"God all-knowing! to his gaze
Every thought its flight betrays:
Hearts he tries, and actions weighs;
Silence, darkness, deepest night,
Veil no moment from his sight.

"Glory feels his sudden blow:
Now he stoops to lift the low;
Now he breaks the strong man's bow:
Hunger finds a banquet spread;
Wealth must labor for his bread.

"She whose children like a crown
Wreathed her temples, bears his frown;
Childless to the grave goes down.
Round the lonely matron's feet
Blooming sons and daughters meet.

"Oft his grace the beggar shares;
Him to princely halls he bears;
For his seat a throne prepares:
Low he bringeth, lifteth high;
Poor grow rich, rich lowly lie.

"Now he fills the tomb with prey;
Now he rolls the stone away:
None his swift command can stay.
Earth and all its pillars stand,
Propped by his sustaining hand.

"Haste thy chariot, Lord, and bring
Him of whom the angels sing;
Earth awaits her promised King:
Let the ages swiftly run;
Bring the great Anointed One."

Hannah thus her song sublime
Onward breathed through coming time:
She the hills of faith could climb,
And discern the Star whose light
Backward shone a beacon bright.

Oh for zeal like this to fire
Languid faith and slow desire!
Breath of heaven, awake the lyre;
Warm our hearts with Hannah's love;
Waft our souls, like hers, above.

ABIGAIL.

"She was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance." 1 SAM. 25:3.

"GIRD on the sword, each man his sword,"
Was David's warlike cry;
"By morning light this wretch abhorred
And all his train shall die.

"From ravening beast and plundering clan
I fenced his flocks around;
Astray no herd neglected ran,
While near my tented ground.

"In vain I kept his goods secure;
He renders ill for good.
Up, up! the midnight blow shall cure
This ingrate's churlish mood."

The band alert, the chief in haste
His midnight march arrayed;
Nor hill, nor crag, nor woodland waste
His onward course delayed.

Displeasure just and vengeance dread
Foretold a conflict brief;
Four hundred men behind him sped,
Obedient to their chief.

O'er Paran's waste, in order due,
They pressed to Carmel's height,
Where Nabal and his boisterous crew
In revels passed the night:

A boastful chief, a godless throng,
A banquet all unblest;
Rude was the game, profane the song,
And loud the impious jest.

See how the wine on reason preys,
How laughter circles wide,
How cymbals clash and torches blaze,
The advancing foe to guide.

The hovering sword expects its prey:
Now, David, strike the blow:
That feast shall have no second day,
That night no morning know.

But stay! though men resolve and vow,
God's will moves on serene;
And lo, peace-breathing woman now
Steps forth upon the scene.

As o'er the hills the Hebrew lord
Moves onward with his train,
What charm has sheathed the threatening sword,
What pageant gilds the plain?

From yonder height, a stately dame
Descends in fair array;
Servants and mules her wealth proclaim,
Attendant on her way.

The loaves, the meat, the raisins pressed,
The vintage that they bear,
The owner's generous heart attest,
And claim reception fair.

A matron she of noble mien,
Where grace and sweetness meet;
Calm thought sits on her brow serene,
And circumspection sweet.

Honor and prudence on her will
Like duteous handmaids wait.
The queen of Carmel's flowery hill,
Why moves she forth in state?

She bows, she sues at David's feet:
"My lord, Oh hear my plea;
Let me thy just resentment meet;
The trespass lay on me.

"Heed not this man, this man of scorn;
Leave him to his own shame:
Of Belial and of folly born,
Lo, Folly* is his name.

"Like him may every scornful foe
Before thee fall or fly;
And he that would thy power o'erthrow
As low as Nabal lie.

"But stain not thou thy soul with blood,
Nor wake to war the land;
Let thine avenger be thy God,
And not thine own right hand.

"Accept, great chief, my humble suit,
Allay thy handmaid's fear;
And take these gifts of meat and fruit,
Thy weary troops to cheer.

"Sure as the living God doth live,
Sure as exists thy soul,
He to thy house and line shall give
A kingdom to control.

* Nabal, that is, fool or folly. 1 Sam. 25 : 25.

"Thy life shall in the deathless sheaf
With God's own life be bound;
On earth, a heaven-anointed chief;
In heaven, with glory crowned.

"Nor when thy foes are all subdued
Shall this thy glory mar,
That thou didst shed no causeless blood,
Nor wage relentless war.

"But when thou sitt'st on Israel's throne,
Fulfilling God's decree,
Remember thou this meeting lone,
And her who pleads with thee."

Then David cried, "Praise ye the Lord,
Jehovah, Israel's King,
That here, to check my hasty sword,
This shining form did bring.

"And blest be thou; for ever blest
The daughters of thy voice—
Those words that quiver in my breast,
And bid my heart rejoice.

"Freely thy bounteous gift I take,
And all thy wish fulfil;
The churlish Nabal for thy sake
May live in safety still.

"Turn back in peace, and fear thou not
That from this heart of mine
A lifetime or a throne shall blot
A vision so divine."

Death hastens: hushed is Nabal's mirth;
His rage and folly sleep:
The weak and wicked pass from earth,
And who for them will weep?

Once more a pageant bright is seen
On Carmel's verdant side;
For Abigail, the mountain queen,
Goes forth as David's bride.

In heaven this union sure was planned,
So wisely matched the pair;
He the first champion of the land,
And she the fairest fair.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

1 Kings 10:1–10.

Who from the south ascends? What mighty queen,
Moving with laden camels day by day,
To Syria's hills, to Salem's towers is seen,
Urging her stately way?

Lo, from the spicy bosom of Sabea,
Led by resounding fame through wilds unknown,
The stranger seeks thy shrine, Oh fair Judea—
Seeks, Solomon, thy throne.

For she a tale of wonder hath been told,
Of plenteous wisdom breathed on thee from heaven;
That deep and secret things thou canst unfold,
By power divinely given.

But chief thy knowledge of the sacred law,
Jehovah's special gift, her soul hath stirred;
From that rich treasure-house she comes to draw
The life-imparting word.

For this Cham's royal daughter leaves her throne,
A pilgrim over lonely wilds to go:
She seeks the truth; what Israel's God makes known,
Her soul aspires to know.

The words of wisdom from those lips to hear,
A thousand leagues she journeys night and day,
The mountain rivers swell, and deserts drear,
In vain obstruct the way.

Oh for a race of such Sabean queens,
So fervid in the thirst for truth divine,
So dauntless and untiring in the means
To aid their high design.

Behold those moving hillocks, trained and tried,
Huge camels with their slow, earth-shaking tread.
Gums, incense by luxuriant groves supplied,
Gems from the Red sea's bed,

Flavors, perfumes, and massive gold they bring;
And near the lion-footed throne of state,
A fitting present for the far-famed king,
They heap the costly freight.

She comes: what grace, what grandeur she displays!
A human beauty, but with traits divine:
Her speech a resolute high heart betrays,
Her looks a grace benign.

She comes, and flashing on her raptured sight,
Jerusalem, the glory of all lands,
Queenlike, with garments trailed along the height,
In stately beauty stands.

How fair her gates, unfolding like the morn;
Her walls and towers like Eden's mountains rise,
Crowned with the temple, whose bright plan was drawn
From patterns in the skies.

The king in state sits on his ivory throne—
A nobler throne his own soul-seated brow;
For wisdom there reigns o'er king Solomon,
And bids the monarch bow.

Fixed in his aspect, beauty dwells with awe,
And power is lost in wisdom's brighter reign.
Approach, Oh queen; two pillars, love and law,
This heaven-built throne sustain.

O'erwhelmed with wonder, all her flowing heart
The queen unfolded to king David's son.
She asked for truth, and much he could impart
Of Israel's holy One.

She proved him long with questions deep and high;
Yet still beyond her doubts his answers ran,
Piercing all mysteries of earth and sky,
Of nature, and of man.

Not hers that oriental taste unsound,
For point and contrast—puzzles vain and stale—
Enigmas dark, that in conceits profound
Their slender meaning veil.

Her mind's deep yearnings had a nobler birth:
Hers was a thirst to know what heaven reveals;
How men should live and princes reign on earth;
What balm man's nature heals.

In habitable earth's remotest scope,
Some whispering angel moved her royal mind
To issue forth in high heroic hope
The jewel truth to find.

Greater than Solomon! when will Thy throne
Receive such homage, and such zeal awake?
Who now will journey thus from zone to zone,
For heavenly truth's dear sake?

The day will come: to Zion's heights so fair
A mightier throng of pilgrims shall ascend;
Not only queens, but kings of Sheba there
Shall gifts and worship blend.

From torrid groves, from either softening pole,
In throngs they come, with offerings rich and free:
None asks the way; they meet, commingle, roll
As rivers to the sea.

Then with their doubts resolved and hearts made strong,
Laden with knowledge, grateful to our God,
Each shall return with fresh enlivened song
To bless his own abode.

THE SHUNAMITE.

2 KINGS 4:1–37.

FRUITFUL in deeds of high account,
And charms that please the eye,
Esdraelon's plain and Tabor's mount
In grace and grandeur vie.

A mount of gardens and of trees;
A plain whose echoes hold
The murmurs of the neighboring seas,
And memories of old.

There Shunem flourished, green and calm
The mountain shade below;
A rural town, where vine and palm,
Oaks, olives loved to grow.

A noble matron there was found,
Fulfilling life's high aim;
The blessings that she dealt around
Gave fragrance to her name.

In peace upon her ample lands
She flourished with her lord;
With virtuous deeds she filled her hands,
With plenty crowned her board.

The stranger at her table sat,
From strangeness all released,
For welcome met him at the gate,
And kindness at the feast.

But yet, though all might freely rest,
And none o'erlooked depart,
The good man was the cherished guest,
The righteous had her heart.

Now who is this that lingering stays
Beneath the wayside tree?
He leans upon his staff and prays:
How earnest is his plea.

'T is he that caught the mantle's fold
From his ascending guide:
He wears it still, the sacred robe
That smote the waves aside.

"Hail, pilgrim! hither turn and rest,
My house and heart are free;
My meat is waiting for a guest,
My well-spring leaps for thee.

"For thee I keep an honored seat;
Come in, come in, my lord:
The threshold longs thy foot to greet;
Why standest thou abroad?"

He entered; oft he came; regard
Warmed into friendship true:
He blessed the blessings that he shared;
They giving, wealthier grew.

"See how this prophet comes and goes,
His mission to fulfil:
A holy man, what zeal he shows
To do his Master's will.

"Now let us make with kindly care
A chamber for our guest;
A room for thought, repose, and prayer,
Apart from all the rest.

"There place a table, lamp, and bed,
A meditating chair,
And he will prize the modest shed
More than a palace fair."

'T was made—a nook so calm and bright,
The prophet loved the place.
"How shall I now," he said, "requite
This dear heart for her grace?

"Go call her." Quick she forward pressed;
Her foot paused at the door.
"The blessing of Jehovah rest
On thee and on thy store.

"Thou hast been careful with this care
To show thy love for me;
What recompense shall I prepare,
What blessing ask for thee?

"Disclose thy wish; my grateful heart
Would fain its kindness show;
Shall I to king or chieftain speak,
Their favors to bestow?"

She spoke; the words, serene and clear,
From her deep heart were sent:
"I dwell among my people here,
And I am well content."

Meek answer, words profoundly sweet,
With heavenly wisdom filled;
A text that may be bruised and beat,
And yet fresh odors yield.

Charmed with her spirit's lowly bent,
He still some way would find
To make contentment more content,
More peaceful peace of mind.

Call her again. "Thou hast no son;
A son thou shalt embrace:
Though long delayed, the gift is won
From heaven's benignant grace."

"Nay, speak not thus, thou man of God,
Nor my fond heart betray."
"My word is truth; a living rod,
Thy stem shall yet display.

"Ere yet another year is told,
In all his sweet young charms,
A richer prize than lands or gold,
A son shall fill thine arms."

Revolving time brought round the hour
That showed the prophet's truth;
The father in his boy's young flower
Renewed his own fair youth.

He grew, with promise bright emblazed
In either parent's thought;
The doating father loved and praised,
The mother loved and taught.

One morn—a memorable day
To Shunem's honored pair—
The child amid the reapers gay
Enjoyed the fragrant air.

But when the solar flame grew red,
He fell beneath its ray,
And shrieked in pain, "My head, my head!"
As on the ground he lay.

Borne to his mother's arms, she sought
To soothe his raging pain;
She clasped him close, but her fond thought
Could not the soul detain.

Grim death had clasped him too, and soon
The brighter part set free:
He murmured, wept, and groaned till noon,
Then died upon her knee.

No tear the ardent mother shed,
No lock nor garment tore,
But gently to the prophet's bed
Her clay-cold burden bore.
And there the lifeless form she laid,
And careful closed the door.

"To Carmel's height! arise, arise!
I must this prophet see:
Drive on, drive swiftly on," she cries;
"Slack not thy speed for me."

There sat the prophet high and dread,
With heavenly musings fraught;

Wide o'er surrounding Israel sped
His vision and his thought.

Far off the cloud of dust he spied;
He marked the goaded beast:
"Lo, 't is the Shunamite!" he cried;
"Why seeks she now the priest?

'Go forth, Gehazi; greet her fair,
And ask in accents mild,
How art thou? Is it well with thee?
Well with thy spouse and child?"

One word alone she quick returned,
Large in its import, "Well!"
A doubtful word, that left unlearned
The news it seemed to tell.

She following close, prone downward cast
Her limbs upon the ground,
And seized his feet; her breath came fast,
Her groans reëchoed round.

"Her soul is vexed," exclaimed the seer;
"Some heavy stroke she feels;

But what or whence the doom severe,
No sign from heaven reveals."

"Did I this son, in word or thought,
Desire of thee, my lord?
Did I not say, Delude me not
With thy deceitful word?"

Sobbing she spoke; her words and sighs
Disclose the mournful truth.
"Go lay my staff," the prophet cries,
"My staff upon the youth.

"Gird up thy loins, increase thy speed,
Salute none by the way,
And on the cold face of the dead
My staff securely lay."

'T was done, and vainly done: the rod
Recalled no voice or breath;
It bore no sovereign word from God
To wring its prey from death.

And still the mother's tears would roll,
And still she urged the seer:

"As God doth live, as lives thy soul,
I will not leave thee here."

To Shunem, to the child he came,
And by the bedside there
The prophet, with a steadfast aim,
Prayed a prevailing prayer.

Then quickly o'er the form at rest
His vigorous limbs he spread;
His lip on lip, his breast on breast,
His hand on hand he laid.

The soul returned; life's current played;
The face resumed its charms:
A living child the prophet laid
In its fond mother's arms.

Such power had faith in days of old;
So brightly gleams the page
Where Shunem's matron is enrolled
Beside the Tishbite sage.

JEHOSHEBA, DAUGHTER OF ATHALIAH.

2 Kings 11.

What darkness and effulgence, side by side,
Are seen on history's page!
Some shining star, some spirit heaven-allied,
Breaks through the rudest age.
So in wild nature's lap the thistle grows
On the same hillock with the fragrant rose.

Not less than queenlike is each lofty brow
Of yon illustrious pair;
Mother and child; how from a poisoned bough
Could spring such myrtle fair?
Both scions of a rank, sin-tainted line,
But one a graft on fair Judea's vine.

This rapt in soul, arm-folded, and apart,
In meek devotion stands;

That with impenitent remorse at heart,
Wrings her polluted hands:
The one washed white in Zion's sacred flood,
The other crimson-dyed in pools of blood.

Uncrowned the daughter, but in soul a queen,
She for the kingdom cares;
The other crowned, but baneful in her mien,
Corrodes the crown she wears:
Jehosheba, bright sister of the throne;
Fell Athaliah, hater of her own.

Oh, how unlike! 't is lurid night, 't is day,
Beneath the selfsame sky;
The lightning passions in this aspect play,
In that the sunbeams lie;
These locks with nightshade's deadly berries crowned,
And those the olive's silvery leaves surround.

Oh how unlike! this one hath fiercely slain
The kingdom's royal seed:
She leaps upon the throne, for she must reign,
And they must groan and bleed.

This day she proudly marks with triumph, fame:
Another comes; *Requital* is its name.

She dreams not what high deeds that priestess calm,
Deep-moved, can nobly do;
That she, with footstep light and lily palm,
Baffled her fiendlike crew,
Bore off one victim from her stern decree,
And rears him yet a future king to be.

All hail, thou noble priestess, firm and brave
At duty's post to stand,
From bloodhounds fierce the hunted hart to save;
Nor stayed thy rescuing hand,
Till the fair infant from the assassin's blade
Was shrouded in the temple's sacred shade.

Day of requital, gloriously red
It dawns upon the land:
Great David's crown is on the young child's head,
The sceptre in his hand.
In vain the murderess sounds her warlike cry;
"God save the king!" the thundering shouts reply.

The weapons of the temple clash and gleam,
Athirst to drink her gore:
Chased from the courts, she falls by will Supreme,
At her own palace door.
Her doom was fashioned from her soul malign,
For guilt like steel allures the bolt divine.

But she the priestess, Oh what rich delight
Her raptured bosom swelled—
Beamed from her brow what hopes with promise bright,
As she that child beheld
A sovereign king, before the Lord all holy
Bending his gold-crowned head devout and lowly.

His sad declension, all to her unknown,
Veiled in the future lay:
Respect from all, and honor from the throne,
Illumed her heavenward way.
Soft her decline, and still in sacred story
Her fair orb rises and revolves in glory.

ESTHER.

What radiant beauty, rising from the east,
Sheds rose-light on the air?
Methinks heaven's dove takes shelter in her breast,
As in a temple fair.
The virtues with their robes of white,
The graces with their zone,
Religion with her breastplate bright,
Prepare her for a throne.
Ascend, fair queen, and with submission sweet,
By Persia's gorgeous sovereign take thy seat.

Imperial Jewess, thy sweet story sheds
A light on heaven's deep ways;
Shows Providence inweaving golden threads
Amid life's dubious maze.
From varying shades of good and ill
One beauteous whole is wrought,
While all man's erring paths fulfil
Eternal Wisdom's thought.

But mark the boundless distance in the end,
Between God's foe and his accepted friend.

Persia's fierce wrath, and Agag's righteous doom,
The pride, the pomp of man,
The courtier's incense, Esther's virgin bloom,
Are parts of one great plan;
The anger of the insulted queen,
And Haman's treacherous blow,
Directed by a power unseen,
Like rills together flow:
Passion and riot, mirth and hate, combine
To honor and exalt the Hand divine.

Oh, fair *Hadassah*,* stately myrtle-tree,
Thy perfume scattering wide;
Oh, prudent *Esther*,† safely lodged in thee
God's secret things may hide.
Thy soul in heavenly grace complete,
Thy look serenely bright,
Thy lips with honey dropping sweet,
Well art thou named *Delight*.

* Hadassah signifies a myrtle, also joy and delight.
† Esther, secret or hidden, and by analogy, prudent and cautious.

But when, with fine discretion and fixed aim
Thou veil'st thy purpose, *Secret* is thy name.

Enthroned, prepared, and waiting—born to save
The feeble and the few;
Israel's afflicted remnant from the grave
To shield with bosom true;
Arise, fair morning star, and shine,
All royal in array;
Let myrtles with thy tresses twine,
And perfumes lead the way.
Come, thou devoted, now thine influence try,
Forth with thy motto, "If I die, I die!"

Behold the golden sceptre: ne'er before
So graceful seemed that rod;
Ne'er in its touch such wondrous virtue bore:
It saves the church of God.
From its bright point the darting rays
Are tipped with light divine;
The queen grows brighter in its blaze,
Her people rise and shine.

Prone falls the oppressor, and a sway more bland
Spreads like bedewing grace o'er Persia's land.

Be all thy foes like Haman, O Most High,
Defeated in their aims;
Thy church victorious, and by faith descry
What Esther's life proclaims:
"Fear not, the living God looks down,
And sways the world below;
Fear not, he will the faithful crown,
The guilty head lay low.
Thy cry, thy plaint, Oh mourning dove, he hears,
And kindly bends to wipe away thy tears."

THE VIRGIN MARY.

Hail, Gabriel! ancient seraph, hail!
Why shroudest thou thy heavenly mail,
Thy white wings and encircling beams,
Beneath a reverend pilgrim's guise?
Bring'st thou from yonder rosy skies
High tidings, or prophetic dreams?
Whate'er thy hest, with grace it teems;
Peace radiates from thy friendly eyes,
Thy breathing is a fragrant gale.
Hail, Gabriel! ancient seraph, hail!

I seek a place unknown to fame;
I seek a maid of lowly name,
Announcing that from her shall spring
The promised Child, the anointed King.
My mission is of peace, not war:
I come with tidings loftier far
Than ever waked earth's drowsy ear:
In heaven I left each seraph bright

Rejoicing in his golden sphere—
Rejoicing that the earth's long night
Gives place to heaven's eternal year.
I come before Messiah's car,
The herald of that eastern Star,
Which, rising soon o'er Judah's hills,
Eden's great prophecy fulfils.

"Hail, Mary! highly favored, hail!
Thou with thy God hast favor found.
The Lord is near; thou shalt prevail,
And free to thee shall grace abound.
Amid all women blest, most blest;
Amid the happy, happiest thou:
A King shall on thy bosom rest,
Before whose throne all hearts shall bow.
O'ershadowing Love shall rest on thee;
The Son of God thy son shall be:
O'er all the earth his grace shall flow;
No end his blissful kingdom know."

Meek mother, in thy simple faith
Believing what the angel saith,

Calm and implicit, day by day
Pursue thy thought-revolving way.
Thou standest on a mount sublime;
Before thee golden years unroll;
One gushing song streams on through time;
The light expands from pole to pole.
Behold the kindling mountains burn!
Time's fulness hastes to overflow;
To living forms the shadows turn;
The types with bright fulfilment glow:
All eyes with earnest meaning look
On mystery's unfolding book.

Oh daughter of the chosen line,
Triumphant from thy withered vine
A vigorous stem shall rise.
The mother of a Child divine—
In this thy glory lies:
Sole favor to one female shown,
Sole grace bestowed on thee alone.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord,"
Thus Mary in her rapture sung,

"For he my lowly prayer hath heard,
And tuned to praise my trembling tongue.
Great things for me his grace hath done:
He is the Lord, the Holy One.

"My spirit glories in my God;
The grace he gives exalts his name:
The proud he scatters with his rod,
The meek and lowly lifts to fame.
He fills the hungry with content;
The full away are hungry sent.

"His mercy, dropping from the skies,
Descends on all that fear his face;
See Israel, crowned with glory, rise,
Sustained by his almighty grace:
To Abraham was the promise given:
That pledge is now fulfilled by heaven."

Thus Mary through her song's rich stream
The praise of her Redeemer spread;
Grace, heavenly grace, was all her theme;
Of her own service naught she said,

But breathed a strain, whose ruling chord
Was meek submission to her Lord.

Nor could the faithful Mary dream
Her name would grace an idol shrine,
With monstrous head and baleful beam
Usurping attributes divine,
Defying heaven, and cheating earth
With figments of enormous birth.

Though highly favored, not divine,
She died, and fills an earthly grave:
No claim she made to rule or shine,
No worship asked, no sins forgave.
The gospel's treacherous foes are they
Who by their crowning dim her ray.

Rome's idol goddess! hark, they cry,
"Hail, Mary, hail! Madonna, hear!"
Her imaged form they deify.
Ah, Mary's soul with wrath severe
Had kindled, or been chilled with fear,
To her had all this homage bold,
This *Mary-worship*, been foretold.

ELISABETH.

"His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." LUKE 1:5, 6.

SOUND, music, sound! salute with rapturous air
Whom heaven announces as *the blameless pair.*
See on the sacred page portrayed in light,
The spotless consort and the priest upright.
The knots are roses, and the links are golden,
By which in union ransomed hearts are holden.

Daughter of Aaron, fancy loves to trace
In thee a model of domestic grace.
Opposing gifts, the firm, the yielding trait,
The strong and sweet on thy perfection wait.
So calmly radiant, so divinely human—
To shine thus mildly be the pride of woman.

Rejoicing in the grace to Mary shown,
As grateful for her gifts as for thine own.

Consistent, pure, thy full-orbed faith combined
The active hand and the believing mind,
Serenely hallowing all thy sphere of duty
With that clean heart which is divinest beauty.

Ye walked together: hints of happy days,
And many an inference sweet that word conveys.
Together moving on through sun and cloud,
Pealing one anthem, at one altar bowed:
Grief, joy, wealth, want, are cement to the union
Whose base is fixed on holy heart-communion.

Ye walked together—walked in faith and awe
Before your God, meek keepers of his law;
Together saw the star o'er Bethlehem shine,
And in the babe discerned the traits divine.
In heaven ye walk together, clothed in glory,
Rehearsing oft that ancient, sweet child story.

ANNA.

"She was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." LUKE 2:37.

LONG had the prophetess her dwelling made
On Zion's hallowed ground;
There, by the altar in the temple's shade,
Her duties had their bound.

She prized the blessings heavenly rites impart;
She loved God's courts so fair:
No hour of worship came but Anna's heart
And Anna's voice were there.

She prayed, served God; perchance she daily sought
To win the ear of youth,
To plant in some fresh mind a kindling thought,
A germ of holy truth.

Her name was "gracious,"* gracious all her ways;
Far round her light was thrown;
And bright at last on her declining days
The Star of Bethlehem shone.

For in the temple courts her eyes beheld
The virgin and the Child.
Son of the Highest! to her soul revealed,
She knew the Undefiled.

Hark! aged Anna lifts her trembling voice:
"Lo, Zion's King is here!
Ye mountains that keep guard around, rejoice;
Salvation draweth near.

"Look up, Oh Salem! victory is won;
Messiah takes his seat:
Ye seek the Christ; his kingdom is begun;
Come worship at his feet.

"This Child is your redemption; in his face
Behold indwelling power:
Thanksgiving to the Fountain-head of grace
That gives mine eyes this hour."

* Anna signifies gracious, merciful.

Thus Anna strove the gospel to proclaim,
And oft she cried, "Arise!
Ye seek Messiah; Jesus is his name:
His star is in the skies."

Ye long bereaved, ye shadows of good days,
Ye aged, withered, weak,
Be Annas: if ye murmur, murmur praise;
Speak blessings, if ye speak.

Look forward and not rearward for your light;
Hail every cheering ray;
Live near the temple; thankful rest at night;
With thanks begin the day.

So shall your hoary years, like sunset rays,
Diffuse a mellow light;
And age be as a starry crown, whose blaze
Melts softly into night.

THE SISTERS OF BETHANY.

Mountain that overhang'st with olive shade
The city of our King,
Where once the Voice divine familiar strayed,
E'en as it walked through Eden's twilight glade
In earth's primeval spring!

In spirit from thy brow descending slow,
We mark each hallowed place;
Paths where those sacred feet have left their glow,
And hamlets from beneath whose porches low
Shone that immortal face.

Hail, sacred olive, sentinel sublime,
Voucher of heaven's account!
Palms, cedars, sycamores, forsake the clime;
Thou only standest witness of all time,
The keeper of the mount.

Here let us sit, and o'er the city weep,
Where wept those heavenly eyes.
Queen city of the earth, what billows deep
Break on our bosoms and through memory sweep,
As all thy fortunes rise!

Where last those beauteous feet impressed the ground,
Oh, breathe a reverent prayer!
Seek not for relics on this hallowed mound;
But hopes divine and gratitude profound
From these pure regions bear.

Thou, Bethany, didst oft at evening gray
Embower that presence bright;
There grew the palms whose branches strewed the way,
There hung the cloud that on the Ascension day
Rapt him from earthly sight.

Still clings the village to the mountain's breast,
Still wave the trees above,
Where stood the home beloved, the cottage blest,
Whose doors expanding to a weary Guest,
Took in the heavenly Dove.

The welcome Guest! meek sisters, how ye shine
Such light those looks impart:
Ye see his face, and at his feet recline;
His glowing words burn, ripen, and refine
Each mute, expectant heart.

Haste, Martha, haste! prepare the neat repast,
He sups with thee to-night;
Bring forth the best, display thy care and taste;
Rich be the feast, and all in order placed,
To yield thy Guest delight.

Not so; the Teacher marks the frown she wears,
Her flushed, impatient look:
"Oh, Martha, Martha, these are needless cares;
One thing is needful, so my word declares."
Such was the mild rebuke.

Ye busy Marthas, troubled, wearied, vexed
With little household cares,
For you the kindly chiding of the text;
Take to your hearts, when fretted and perplexed,
The lesson that it bears.

But Mary's eye, with love-illumined ray,
Dwelt on her Teacher's face;
At Wisdom's feet in earnest heed she lay,
Heart-listening, treasuring up each bright display
Of soul-subduing grace.

"Mary hath chosen well her goodly part,"
So did those lips proclaim.
Sweet is the story of her loving heart;
Love shines engraven on her life's fair chart,
And woven in her name.

Choose ye with Mary; to your Saviour's feet
In rapt attention cling;
Take the meek listener's part, the learner's seat,
Seek wisdom, and enjoy, in silence sweet,
The presence of your King.

THE POOR WIDOW.

"And there came a certain poor widow; and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing." MARK 12:42.

NOT by their gifts heaven's righteous balance weighs
The large heart and the small;
No mine of gold, no treasure-house displays
What she gave who gave *all.*

More than the flocks that feed on hills and plains,
Than shrines or churches tall,
Than gems, or choicest pearls, or wide domains,
Was this poor widow's *all.*

Poor and bereaved, yet still her bosom glows
At sweet compassion's call;
She hears the summons, and with zeal bestows
Her unreluctant *all.*

Ye give the harvest sheaf, the glittering gold,
The fat ox from the stall;
She giveth nobler treasure, wealth untold,
Two mites—it is her *all.*

Ye have large hearts, ye give a boundless store,
Your time in field, court, hall;
Ye give your blessing too; she giveth more,
For she bestoweth *all.*

Queens may give all; but this illustrious gift
We still unrivalled call:
'T was her meek faith, her love, her sacred thrift
Enriched and blessed her *all.*

DORCAS.

"This woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did." Acts 9:36.

THERE 's grace, there 's majesty in death,
When saints their wings unbind,
Exhale in praise their latest breath,
And leave a glow behind.

Thus did this dear disciple rest;
In heavenly peace she lay:
While friends with heavy grief oppressed
Stood weeping o'er the clay.

They showed the labor of her hands,
Her beauteous life displayed;
Rehearsed her counsels and commands,
And wept by turns, and prayed.

But soon they saw a wondrous sign—
Life out of death renewed;
The widow's friend, by power divine,
Uprose and with them stood.

The dead returns, more hearts to cheer,
More deeds of love to do;
By conflict with death's angel drear
Prepared for service new.

Oh thou whose warm and emulous heart
This blest example stirs,
Go forth, thy special gifts impart,
And live a life like hers.

So shall thine end be perfect peace;
While, trophies o'er thy grave,
The orphan's warmly-woven fleece
And widow's garments wave.

Then rest in hope, for thou shalt rise;
A voice divinely sweet
Shall lift the lids that close thine eyes,
And warm thine icy feet.

Not here, but in the better land,
Thy life thou shalt resume;
Not Peter's, but thy Saviour's hand,
Shall raise thee from the tomb.

LYDIA.

"Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Acts 16:14.

Her heart was opened—opened to believe
The mission of her Lord;
Divinely opened, eager to receive
The fertilizing word.

'T was by Philippi's river-side renowned
Her light began to dawn.
Oh, gate of heaven! 't is holy, heavenly ground
Where'er a soul is born.

See how her growing faith aspires to show
The bursting bloom of love:
She keeps her hands engaged for saints below,
Her heart engaged above.

Intent on generous deeds, she serves and waits;
Her house the Christian's home:
She spreads her board, throws wide her joyful gates;
Her heart for all has room.

Her cheerful bounty runs before request,
Arrests the stranger's feet;
Constrains the wavering, soothes the weary guest,
And makes acceptance sweet.

Blest are the givers: she gave lodging fair;
Good tidings they bestowed:
The outward gift with inner blessings rare
Back to her bosom flowed.

Thus oft from gifts returning to the breast
A double blessing springs;
E'en as the freed dove, coming home to rest,
A precious grain-seed brings.

EVE AND HER DAUGHTERS OF HOLY WRIT

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